

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1, 2, 4-22 and 26 are pending. Claims 1 and 26 are independent. Claim 1 is hereby amended. Claim 26 is allowed. Claims 3, 23-25 and 27-82 are canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. No new matter is added by these amendments. Support for the amended recitations in the claims is found throughout the specification and the canceled claims. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicant is entitled.

Claims 3, 6 and 8-22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant submits that claim 3 has been canceled and incorporated into independent claim 1. Claims 2 and 4-22 depend on claim 1.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,825,528 to Goosen.

Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,580,481 to Ueda et al.

The allowable subject matter of claim 3 has been incorporated into independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is believed to be patentable.

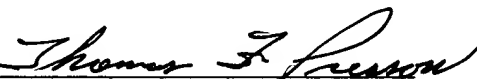
CONCLUSION

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicant respectfully requests early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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